



*Your life. Your needs. Your circle.*

## Information for people with a visual impairment

This leaflet summarises resources and support available in Gloucestershire to people with a visual impairment, and gives details of how to find out more. **This information sheet is also available in large print.**

### Local Authority Resources

#### Sensory Services Team

Social care staff can give advice, support, skills training and information to visually impaired people, their families and carers. We aim to make you as independent as possible. If you wish, we can provide links to other organisations that support visually impaired people.

We can also provide rehabilitation, specialist equipment, and other services such as mobility training. The support you receive will depend on an assessment of your needs. Together, we can discuss what you want to achieve, and what support and aids would be appropriate.

There is no charge for help from Health or Sensory Services fieldwork staff. Following your assessment, you may be required to make a financial contribution towards some services, based on your ability to pay.

**Phone:** Adult Social Care Helpdesk 01452 426868

**Phone:** Sensory Services Team 01452 426387



## The Library

The Library Service provides a range of spoken word CDs (and some cassettes, though these are being phased out), downloadable eAudiobooks and large print books; the library can refer you to the Calibre Audio Library service. Audio described films are also available.

All libraries around the county have a public computer equipped with Supernova speech and magnification; Supernova pens available for loan to assist you to access printed material.

**Phone:** Libraries Helpline on 0845 230 5420 or ask at your local library

**Website:** [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries)

## Health Services

### Low Vision Clinics

The Health Service(s) have Low Vision Clinics in the County to provide assessment, and to advise on and provide equipment, such as magnifiers, to maximise your remaining vision.

Other people who may be able to assist:

- Community Nurses
- Occupational Therapists
- Ophthalmologists
- District Nurses
- Health Visitors
- Volunteer Co-ordinators

**Contact:** Your doctor for information about all health services

## Local Voluntary Organisations

### Forest Sensory Services

Forest Sensory Services are a local, independent charity, supporting people who have a visual impairment. Forest Sensory Services are open Monday to Thursday, 9am to 4pm; call or email to make an appointment. Forest Sensory Services provide training and advice, opportunities to socialise, and rehabilitation. Forest Sensory Services demonstrate and sell specialist equipment and run groups for newly registered visually impaired people, along with handicraft groups and keep fit activities.

**Address:** Foxes Bridge, Valley Road, Cinderford, GL14 2LJ

**Phone:** 01594 827711

**Email:** [info@forestsensoryservices.org](mailto:info@forestsensoryservices.org)

**Website:** [www.forestsensoryservices.org](http://www.forestsensoryservices.org)

### Insight Gloucestershire

Insight Gloucestershire is a local, independent charity for people registered Sight Impaired (partially sighted), or Severely Sight Impaired (blind).

There is a resource centre with specialist equipment for people to try. There is also a computer suite equipped with software specifically for visually impaired people. Insight Gloucestershire demonstrates and sells specialist equipment.

The centre is open from Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 1.00 pm, at the address below.



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Insight Gloucestershire runs a visiting service for those registered as sight impaired, or severely sight impaired, which gives help, information and advice, and tries to provide regular volunteer visitors for those with specific needs. Hospital Information Points are at Cheltenham, Gloucester, Cirencester and Stroud hospitals. A regular newsletter is sent out to all members and some financial help is given to clubs for people with impaired vision who live in the county.

**Address:** 81 Albion Street, Cheltenham GL52 2RZ.

**Phone:** 01242 221170

**Website:** [www.insight-glos.org.uk](http://www.insight-glos.org.uk)

There may be other organisations available in your area:

In Gloucestershire, [Healthwatch Gloucestershire 'Find a Service'](http://findaservice.healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk) can give you details of advice centres in your local area: Freephone **0800 652 5193** or view the website at:

<http://findaservice.healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk> There is also information about activities and support in your community at [www.yourcircle.org.uk](http://www.yourcircle.org.uk)

## **Employment, financial assistance and entitlements Disability Employment Adviser (DEA)**

Disability Employment Advisers (DEA) are specially trained to help you overcome difficulties in finding suitable employment.

**Contact:** Your local Jobcentre Plus; contact details will be listed in your phone book.

## Financial assistance

You may be entitled to financial assistance (e.g. Attendance Allowance (AA), Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP)), a reduction in charges (e.g. TV licence). For more information contact:

**Phone:** Jobcentre Plus 0800 055 6688

**Phone:** Disability Living Allowance Helpline, part of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) on 08457 123 456 (For DLA and PIP)

**Phone:** Attendance Allowance, part of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) on 0345 605 6055 or on 0845 605 6055

**Website:** [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Your Circle has more information about what might be available at [www.yourcircle.org.uk](http://www.yourcircle.org.uk) in the section 'Benefit Assessment'

Age UK can help older people to apply for benefits.

You could also contact your local Citizens' Advice Bureau for advice.

## Free sight test

You may be entitled to a free sight test if you are registered as blind or partially sighted. For more information contact:

- NHS Help with Health Costs advice line  
**Phone:** 0300 330 1343
- **Website:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) search for 'eyesight costs'
- **Website:** [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) search for 'eyecare'



## Travel concessions

Bus concessions may be available to people registered Severely Sight Impaired. Contact your local council for information; proof of registration will be required.

Train concessions may be available to people registered Severely Sight Impaired. Contact your local station for details; proof of registration will be required.

## Parking concessions

The Blue Badge scheme is designed to give Severely Sight Impaired people, and those who are unable or virtually unable to walk, the ability to park close to the facilities and services they need to use, so as to improve their lifestyle, independence and freedom of choice. Search for 'Blue Badge Information Sheet' at [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk) for further details, or contact the Adult Social Care Helpdesk on **01452 426868**.

## Postal concessions

The Royal Mail Articles for the Blind scheme is a free 1st class mail service for people sending items specifically designed for blind and visually impaired people. Contact Royal Mail for further advice or information.

**Phone:** Royal Mail Customer Services 03457 740 740

**Textphone:** 0845 600 0606.



## Free 195 Directory Enquiries

If you're not able to read or hold a telephone directory due to illness or disability, you can apply for free 195 Directory Enquiries.

Call 0800 587 0195 to request an application form. Your form will need to be countersigned by a professional who knows you i.e. your doctor, nurse or other medical practitioner.

## Other useful Information and contacts

- **British Wireless for the Blind Fund**

The British Wireless for the Blind Fund provides specially designed and adapted audio equipment for listeners living with sight loss. Radios are made available on free permanent loan to people who are Severely Sight Impaired (blind) or Sight Impaired (partially sighted) and who meet their criteria.

**Phone:** 01622 754757

**Website:** [www.blind.org.uk](http://www.blind.org.uk)

- **Calibre Audio Library**

Calibre Audio Library offers a free lending service of fiction and non-fiction titles on MP3 disks and USB memory sticks for both children and adults. There is a free trial of the service for three months. A £35.00 joining fee is charged.

**Phone:** 01296 432 339

**Website:** [www.calibre.org.uk](http://www.calibre.org.uk)



- **Deafblind UK** (a charity for deafblind adults and their carers)  
**Phone:** 0800 132 320 or, for both voice and text calls, 01733 358100  
**Website:** [www.deafblind.org.uk](http://www.deafblind.org.uk)
- **Guide Dogs** (Guide Dogs is the working name of Guide Dogs for the Blind Association)  
**Phone:** 0118 983 5555  
**Website:** [www.guidedogs.org.uk](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk)
- **National Talking Newspapers and Magazines**  
**Phone:** 0303 123 9999  
**Website:** [www.tnauk.org.uk](http://www.tnauk.org.uk)
- **Partially Sighted Society**  
**Phone:** 0844 477 4966  
**Website:** [www.partsight.org.uk](http://www.partsight.org.uk)
- **Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)**  
The RNIB is a national charity supporting people with sight loss. They provide information on eye conditions, and provide information on a range of equipment and services. They have a radio station broadcasting 24 hours a day, plus many other services helping to enable people with sight loss to live independently.  
**Phone:** RNIB helpline 0303 123 9999  
**Website:** [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)





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- **St. John's Guild for the Blind**  
Phone: 024 7671 4241  
Website: [www.stjohnsguild.org](http://www.stjohnsguild.org)
- **SENSE** (a charity for deafblind children and adults)  
Phone: 0300 330 9256 or 020 7520 0972  
Textphone: 0300 330 9256 or 020 7520 0972  
Website: [www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)  
Email: [info@sense.org.uk](mailto:info@sense.org.uk)
- **Torch Trust Fellowship: (branches in Gloucester, Cheltenham and Forest of Dean)**  
Phone: 01858 438260  
Website: [www.torchtrust.org](http://www.torchtrust.org)
- **Visually Impaired Bowls England (VIBE)**  
Phone: Ms B D Metcalf 07770 376144  
Website: [www.vibowlsengland.org.uk](http://www.vibowlsengland.org.uk)

## Local Talking Newspapers

- **Cheltenham 'The Cotswold Listener'**  
Phone: John Webb 01242 252072  
Email: [john@cotswoldlistener.co.uk](mailto:john@cotswoldlistener.co.uk)
- **Cirencester 'Corinium Talking News'**  
Phone: Mrs J. Leach 01285 851428  
Email: [jillleach263@btinternet.com](mailto:jillleach263@btinternet.com)



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- **Dursley ‘Cotswold Vale Talking News’**  
Phone: Mike Lyons 01453 543565  
Email: [secretary@cvtn.org.uk](mailto:secretary@cvtn.org.uk)
- **Forest of Dean ‘Forest Talk’**  
Phone: Jo Smith 01594 542062  
Email: [jo.smith765@btinternet.com](mailto:jo.smith765@btinternet.com)
- **Gloucester ‘Gloucester Talking Newspaper’**  
Phone: Gerald Tween 01452 611498  
Email: [gerald.tween@btinternet.com](mailto:gerald.tween@btinternet.com)
- **Stroud ‘Five Valleys Sound’**  
Phone: Lesley Partington 01453 832034  
Email: [lesleypartington@hotmail.com](mailto:lesleypartington@hotmail.com)